COORDINATION OF CIA INFORMATION HANDLING ACTIVITIES

GOAL:

Develop a comprehensive Information Handling Strategy for CIA and a formal mechanism for coordination of the Agency's ADP, communications, records management and word processing activities.

PROBLEM:

1. The Executive Advisory Group has given considerable attention to the problem of managing the automatic data processing activities of CIA, recognizing the need for careful control over the growth of this expensive resource. It is becoming increasingly apparent, however, that to control ADP is to control only one element in a family of activities all of which involve the handling of information.

2. CIA collects, transmits, stores, retrieves, shares, collates, transforms, produces and publishes information in bewildering profusion. To facilitate these multiple processes we have developed highly sophisticated and costly communications and ADP systems, related in various ways to our printing and publication facilities and to the pervasive records management processes through which we identify and safeguard the information we need to accomplish our intelligence tasks.

3. These various information handling tools are highly interdependent. Computer data flows on communications lines; communicated messages come to rest in computer data banks; computerized records are converted to microfilm and microfiche; filmed and paper records are scanned electronically for communication to remote display terminals; word processing techniques expand the computer data base or feed computerized text-editing and printing processes, etc., etc. A management program to control a single element in this family of activities will be frustrated by the ways in which decisions made in another area can generate new, unprogrammed increases in workload. The managers of the larger information service components are aware of the need for coordination

and this awareness has protected us from major problems to
date, but a new element is entering the picture, threatening
organizational loss of control.

4. The emerging, as yet ill-defined techniques of "word
processing," are beginning to place in the hands of individual
officers or units the capacity to handle their information far
more effectively and efficiently. This new localized word
processing power is accompanied, however, by the ability to
generate new and unanticipated demands on the central ADP and
communication systems, and it threatens to have dramatic
impact on our records management programs. The Information
Systems Analysis Staff in the O/DDA is attempting to measure
the costs and benefits of these new techniques, but is find-
ing that without the ADP and communication factors the analy-
sis of word processing lacks significance. There are, to be
sure, "stand-alone" word processors, but the advantages of
interconnection are enticing and easily obtained in today's
market, and the use of computer terminals as word processors
(using software packages like SCRIPT) has the potential for
uncontrolled growth.

5. The new Office of Community Information Systems
(OCIS) will apparently be looking at some of these problems
as they relate to the Intelligence Community. CIA has no
counterpart to OCIS, no single voice speaking knowledgeably
about the way information is or should be managed in the
Agency. Indeed, as is noted at budget defense time every
year, CIA does not even have one focal point for all its ADP
effort. The Director of Data Processing manages and can
speak for only about half of the Agency's ADP resources.

6. One of the three DDA management goals for 1978,
along with the search for greater effectiveness and pro-
ficiency, was the enhancement of information management in
the directorate. As we attempt to achieve this goal, we are
continually reminded of the fact that in CIA the sharing of
information and information-handling facilities makes a one-
directorate approach to this problem ineffective. We need
a mechanism to plan and coordinate our information-handling
activities on an Agency-wide basis.

ACTION PROPOSED:

    1. Establish a CIA Information Handling Board (IHB) with a small permanent secretariat or Information Handling Staff (IHS) to provide a senior-level mechanism for creating, examining, coordinating and modifying Agency information-handling policies, activities and plans. The Board, to be chaired by the DDA, should include the DDS&T, DDO, D/NFAC, and Comptroller, or their representatives. The Staff should be headed by a senior officer (GS-15 or -16) and include two other professionals, plus clerical support.

    2. The CIA Information Handling Board would:

    a. Develop and coordinate definitions of and broad Agency policy for information-handling activities.

    b. Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of Agency information-handling activities.

    c. Review plans and proposals for new activities to identify major systems implications, and to ensure compliance with general information-handling policy.

    d. Monitor significant trends in information handling.

    e. Assist in the preparation of program and budget submissions relating to information handling.

    f. Coordinate Agency efforts to identify new and useful techniques, anticipate new requirements, and plan for new systems for handling information.

    g. Maintain familiarity with the plans and guidance developed by OCIS and the IHC for the Intelligence Community.

    h. Appoint and support the CIA representative to OCIS and the IHC.

    i. Refer to the Executive Advisory Group (EAG) such information as may be particularly useful to the EAG in its role as overseer of ADP management.

Examples of current problems.

1. At least eight systems or devices, currently being

planned in the Agency, are intended to perform or are capable

of performing word processing functions. Included are the

following:

> OC Automatic Field Terminal (AFT)

> DDO CRAFT Terminal

> DDI SAFE

> ODP-sponsored standard soft copy terminal

> SCRIPT on the ODP VM system

> Composing and dispatching cables using the ODP VM system

> OL ETECS system

> Interconnecting ETECS and VM

> Etc.

There is no central planning or review process in the Agency

to determine whether these parallel efforts are needed and

to ensure that they are carried out in a coordinated manner.

2. The IHC plans to undertake a study to identify all Com-

munity data bases and the need for access thereto by analysts

in the Community. The OCIS will prepare a Community-wide

five year information system resource plan based on input

from Community members. The Agency does not have a central

focal point to deal with these and other Agency-wide issues

emerging from the IHC, OCIS, OMB, or the Congress.

3. There seems to be a high degree of similarity between the

concepts and requirements driving the SAFE development project

and parts of the CRAFT program proposed by the DDO. These

two programs must be rationalized in the Agency to ensure

that full advantage is taken of opportunities for commonality.

There is currently no Agency mechanism to examine these

programs in an Agency-wide context.

Information Handling Policy Questions

- What word processing links exist between non-ODP computer installations and their customers? What are the resource implications of these links?

- What control do we have (should we have) over customer-initiated, unprogrammed expansion of on-line computer applications?

- What kinds of distributed processing networks should we be developing?

- How much systems survivability can we afford?—Do we need?

- To what extent will (can, should) IC standards in communications and data processing apply in CIA? Do we need separate CIA standards?

- What mini-computer applications can we identify? defend?

- What parts of our automated data bases are records? How should they be scheduled and protected as records? Are any of our data bases vulnerable to inadvertent destruction?

- What role should records management play when a new automated information-handling application is adopted?

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optionol) Coordination of CIA Information Handling Activities

FROM:	EXTENSION	NO.
STAT A1/DDA		DATE **1 JUN 1978**

TO: (Officer designation, room number, ond building)	DATE RECEIVED	DATE FORWARDED	OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Drow o line across column ofter each comment.)
1. DDA				Attached is a final(?) version of the talking paper on Information Handling. The revision of the Action portion reflects this morning's input from Danny May.
2.				
3.				Also attached, for use as appropriate during the discussion of the proposal, are Danny's "examples of current problems" and a few "policy questions" which I prepared, incorporating suggestions from OC. None of us believes these specific items should be in the talking paper, *lest* ~~but~~ we give parochial opponents specific targets to shoot at before they consider the broad question of the need for better coordination.
4.				
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6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				Atts: a/s
11.				cc: ADDA (via EO/DDA)
12.				D/ODP
13.				D/OC
14.				
15.				

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